

Report on Suitability and Access for Essential Maintenance Works

Site Address: 12 Abbots Walk, Reading, RG1 3HW **Proposal:** Essential maintenance works: Fascia replacement and gutter repair.

1. Suitability of Maintenance Response to Site and Setting

The proposed fascia replacement and gutter repair works constitute essential cyclical maintenance, representing a highly suitable and necessary response to the site and its sensitive historic setting.

A. Character and Context Preservation: The site is situated within the historic Reading Abbey Quarter, adjacent to the Grade I Listed Reading Abbey Ruins and the Grade II Listed Forbury Gardens. The works are crucial for the long-term preservation of the building's fabric. Failure to address failing gutters and damaged fascias would inevitably lead to water ingress, causing accelerated decay and structural damage, which would be fundamentally detrimental to the character and appearance of the property within this Conservation Area. The new materials used for replacement will match the existing profile and colour palette to ensure visual continuity and integrity.

B. Minimal Intervention: Unlike large-scale development, these works are non-intrusive, focusing solely on maintaining the building envelope. By preventing deterioration, the maintenance ensures that the property does not require more extensive, disruptive, and costly remedial works in the future, thus preserving the overall amenity and setting of Abbots Walk.

2. Access Arrangements for Execution of Works

The execution of the proposed maintenance works requires temporary and controlled contractor access, which can be achieved adequately while ensuring safety and minimizing disruption to prospective users of the area (residents, public, and adjacent nursery users).

A. Contractor Access and Methodology: Access to the roofline and upper fascia/guttering will be achieved via the **erection of independent TG2021 compliant scaffolding** to the front elevation only, as detailed in the accompanying Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) reference BLUE SKYE GUTTERING 002. The scaffolding will be subject to rigorous safety checks (TG20 compliance).

B. Project Duration and Scheduling: The **core repair work will be completed within a single working day**. The scaffolding, required for safe access, will be temporarily erected a few days prior to the work and dismantled promptly a few days afterwards. This defined, short-term presence minimizes the overall period of temporary disruption to the public realm.

C. Public and User Safety: Given Abbots Walk is a pedestrian area, especially due to the nearby nursery and public gardens, all contractor access and erection/dismantling of equipment will be executed under strictly enforced safety protocols, with a focus on minimizing risk to the public (3.1.1, 3.2.1).

- **Hoarding and Signage:** Temporary protective hoarding and clear, legible signage will be erected around the work area to ensure the safety of pedestrians.
- **Phased Working:** Works will be scheduled to minimize conflict with peak public or nursery drop-off/pick-up times, if necessary, and coordinated with local stakeholders.
- **Duration:** The project duration will be managed efficiently to ensure that temporary obstructions are removed as quickly as possible, ensuring the area's ongoing accessibility is restored promptly.

The robust access methodology detailed in the RAMS, which mandates TG2021 compliant scaffolding and strict safety protocols (including the use of Advanced Guard Rail systems and securing all drop zones with barriers), is deemed adequate and safe, ensuring the necessary maintenance can be completed responsibly within the historic urban environment.